

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL TRIESTE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0943
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME
AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMCONSUL TURIN
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY ZAGREB
AMCONSUL NAPLES

UNCLAS TRIESTE 0371
E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, IT
SUBJ: MAVERICK CECOVINI ELECTED MAYOR OF TRIESTE, FACES
DIFFICULT TASK OF FORMING GOVERNMENT

REF: TRIESTE 0370

1. IN A SURPRISE MOVE ON JULY 28, THE NEWLY ELECTED MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF TRIESTE SELECTED MAVERICK POLITICIAN MANLIO CECOVINI MAYOR. LAWYER CECOVINI, WHO HEADED THE "PER TRIESTE" PROTEST SLATE (SEE REF) WAS SUPPORTED BY THE 17 "PER TRIESTE" VOTES ON THE COUNCIL, AS WELL AS THE RADICALS (3 VOTES), THE NEO-FASCIST MSI (4 VOTES), AND THE MOVIMENTO INDIPENDENTISTI TRIESTINI (1 VOTE), ALL OF WHOM SHARE A COMMON PROTEST IMAGE WITH "PER TRIESTE". BOTH RADICAL LEADER MARCO PANNELLA AND MSI CHIEF GIORGIO ALMIRANTE ATTENDED THE CRUCIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS PRECEDING THE VOTE.

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2. WITH A PLURALITY SIX VOTES SHORT OF A MAJORITY, CECOVINI NOW FACES THE DIFFICULT TASK OF TRYING TO FORM A GOVERNMENT. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING HIS ELECTION, HE STATED THAT HE CONSIDERED HIS MANDATE TO BE "EXPLORATIVE" AND THAT HE ACCEPTED THE COUNCIL S DECISION WITH RESERVATION. "PER TRIESTE" S ANTI-CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT IMAGE WILL MAKE COALITION

WITH THE DC DIFFICULT, AND THE COMMUNISTS HAVE
ALREADY CRITICIZED CECOVINI S SELECTION, PREDICTABLY HITTING
HARD ON MSI SUPPORT.

3. IN CECOVINI S FAVOR, HOWEVER, IS THE ALMOST UNIVERSAL
DISTASTE IN TRIESTE FOR A ROME APPOINTED "COMMISSARIO" WHICH
WILL ETCGHBDCERTAINLY RESULT IF THERE IS A COUNCIL
DEADLOCK. THUS THE COUNCIL MIGHT PUT UP WITH A MINORITY
GOVERNMENT FOR A TIME. ANOTHER LOGICALLY FEASIBLE BUT LESS
LIKELY POSSIBILITY MIGHT BE TO ALLOW THE DC TO SET UP A
COALITION GOVERNMENT WITH "PER TRIESTE" BECOMING THE
OPPOSITION. MANY LOCAL OBSERVERS, HOWEVER, ARE PESSIMISTIC.
ONE HIGH RANKING MEMBER OF THE OUTGOING GOVERNMENT TOLD US
THAT HE SEES LITTLE LIKELIHOOD THAT ANY VIABLE GOVERNMENT
WILL RESULT FROM THE PRESENT COUNCIL MAKEUP, AND THAT A
"COMMISSARIO" IS ALMOST ASSURED.

4. BIO DATA ON CECOVINI:
MANLIO CECOVINI IS A HIGHLY RESPECTED AND INFLUENTIAL LOCAL
CITIZEN. BORN IN TRIESTE 64 YEARS AGO, HE HAS A UNIVERSITY
DEGREE IN LAW AND AT ONE TIME HELD THE POSITION OF CHIEF
LEGAL ADVISER TO THE ALLIED MILITARY GOVERNMENT WHICH
GOVERNED TRIESTE FROM 1945 UNTIL 1954. FOR MANY YEARS
HE HAS HELD THE POSITION OF CHIEF OF THE STATE MAGISTRATE S
OFFICE OF TRIESTE. HE IS POLITICALLY CONSERVATIVE AND ACTIVE
IN THE LIBERAL PARTY FOR MANY YEARS. CECOVINI IS ALSO A
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WELL KNOWN TALENTED WRITER. MUCH OF HIS LITERARY WORK HAS
BEEN DEDICATED TO THE HISTORY AND PROBLEMS OF TRIESTE.
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